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THE
DOVER SETTLEMENT

AND

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THE HILTONS.

BY

JOHN T. HASSAM, A.M.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF DAVID CLAPP & SON.
1882.

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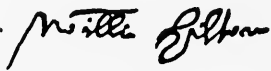
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THE DOVER SETTLEMENT AND THE HILTONS.

THE article entitled "Some of the Descendants of William Hilton," published by me in the REGISTER for April, 1877 (xxxi. 179), contained a brief account of William Hilton, who came from London to Plymouth in New England, in the "Fortune," Nov. 11, 1621, and who died in York, Maine, in 1655 or 1656. It was illustrated by a heliotype of his letter to John Winthrop the younger, dated Piscataqua, April 18, 1633, which gives a specimen of his handwriting. In the Mass. Archives (III. 237), there is a petition of the inhabitants of York, which was presented to the General Court in 1655, in the matter of the complaint of Edward Godfrey against the town of York,  and the following is a facsimile of his signature as it appears on that petition.

That this William Hilton could not have been the William Hilton of Newbury, afterward of Charlestown, who died in Charlestown, 7: 7: 1675, was conclusively shown in the article above referred to. I further stated that their relationship to each other was not as yet clearly established, and I expressed a doubt whether William Hilton of Charlestown could have been the son of the William first above named. This question is at last settled by the discovery of the following petition, which Mr. William B. Trask has just found in the Suffolk Court files, and it is now certain that they were father and son. But this solution of the difficulty leaves William Hilton, senior, with two sons each named William; for William Hilton of York was also his son, as appears by the following deposition,* which was printed in the REGISTER, xxxi. 184.

The Deposition of Majo^r John Davess aged 70 years, or y^eabouts, & Cap^t: Charles F[rost] aged 52 years or thereabouts, these Deponents respectively testify, & Say y^t Willia[m] Hilton now rescident in yorke, in the Province of Mayne, was Co^mmonly known, & [repu]ted, to bee y^e sonn of William Hilton Senior deceased, & formerly lived in Yorke abo[ve] on y^t Tract of Land, y^t lyeth on the South, or South West side of y^e River [] yorke over against the fishing flakes, & next the Ferry, & further Sayth no[t]

Taken upon oath in Court this 30th: of May 1683: p Edw: Rishw[orth]
Recor:"

Although it is unusual for two brothers to bear the same christian name, it is not an unheard of thing, and instances, though rare,

are met with in the history of other families.* Perhaps documents may yet be brought to light which will explain this circumstance. The following is a fac-simile of the signature of William Hilton of Charlestown, *Wm Hilton* the petitioner hereinafter named. It was affixed to the verdict of the jury in the case of John Giffard vs. John Hathorne, and was found by Mr. Trask among the papers on file in that case, which was tried at the Court of Assistants in Boston, March 2, 1674.

To the Honored Generall Court now assembled at Boston

The petition of William Hilton

Humbly sheweth

Where as your petitioners father William Hilton came ouer into New England about the yeare Anno: Dom: 1621: & yo^r petitioner came about one Yeare & an halfe after, and In a litle tyme following settled our selues vpon the River of Pischataq. with Mr Edw: Hilton, who were the first English planters there: W^t haueing much Intercourse with y^e Indeans by way of Trayd, & mutuall giueing & receauing, amongst whome one Tahanto Sagamore of Penecooke, for diuerse kindneses receānd from your petitioners father & him selfe, did freely giue vnto the aforesd William Hilton Sen- or & William Hilton Junio^r six Miles of Land liing on y^e River Penne- conaquigg, being a riuierlett runneing into the riuier Penacooke to y^e East- ward, the sd Land to be bounded soe as may be most for y^e best accommo- dation of your sd petitioner his heyres & assignes. The sd Tahanto did alsoe freely giue to the sd father & sun, & to y^e heyres for euer, Two Miles of the best Meddow Land liing on the North East side of the River of Pennicooke adioyning to the sd River, with all y^e app^tenances, which sd Tract of Land & Meddows were given in the P^sence of Darby Feild & seuerall Indeans In the yeare 1636: At w^h tyme Tahanto went with the aforesd Hiltons to the Land^s, & y^of gaue them possession, All w^h Commonly is known to the Antient Inhabitants of Pischatq, & for the further Confirmation of the sd Gyft or grant, your petitione^r hath a renewed Deede from the sd Tahanto, & since yo^r petitioner vnderstand^t that y^e bee many grants of Land^s lately given y^eabouts to bee layd out, And least any should bee mistaken in Chuesing y^e place, & y^eby Intrench vpon yo^r petitioners right^s: for preuenting w^of

Your petitioner humbly Craueth that his Grant may bee confirmed by this Court, & that A B C or any two of them may bee fully Impoured to sett forth the bounds of all the aboue mentioned Land^s, & make true re- turne y^of vnto this Honord Court, And your petitioner as in duty hee is boūd shall pray for y^or future Well fayre & prosperity.

Boston. June. 1. 1660. The comittee haueing considered the contents of this pet. do not Judge meet y^t the Court grant the same. but haueing considered the petitioners grounds for the app^bacōn of the Indians grant. do Judge meet that 300. acc^{ts} of the said land be set out to y^e pet^r. by a comitte- tee chosen by this Court. so as y^t it may not p^rjudice any plantacōn. and

* For a case in point, see the REGISTER for October, 1881 (xxxv. 372), in the article en- titled "Thomas Hale of Newbury, Mass., 1637. His English Origin and Connections," by the Hon. Robert S. Hale, LL.D., of Elizabethtown, N. Y.

this as a finall end & issue of all futuer claimes by vertue of such grant.
from y^e Indians.

THOMAS DANFORTH

ELEA. LUSHER

HENRY BARTHOLMEW.

The magists Approove of this Retourn
if theire brethren y^e depu^t Consent hereto.

Edw Rawson Secrety.

Consented to by the Deputies William Torrey Cleric.

[Endorsed] The petition of William Hilton ent^d wth y^e magis^{ts} 31 May,
1660 & x^o pd ent.

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Tahanto^s Deed dd out p m^r Danf

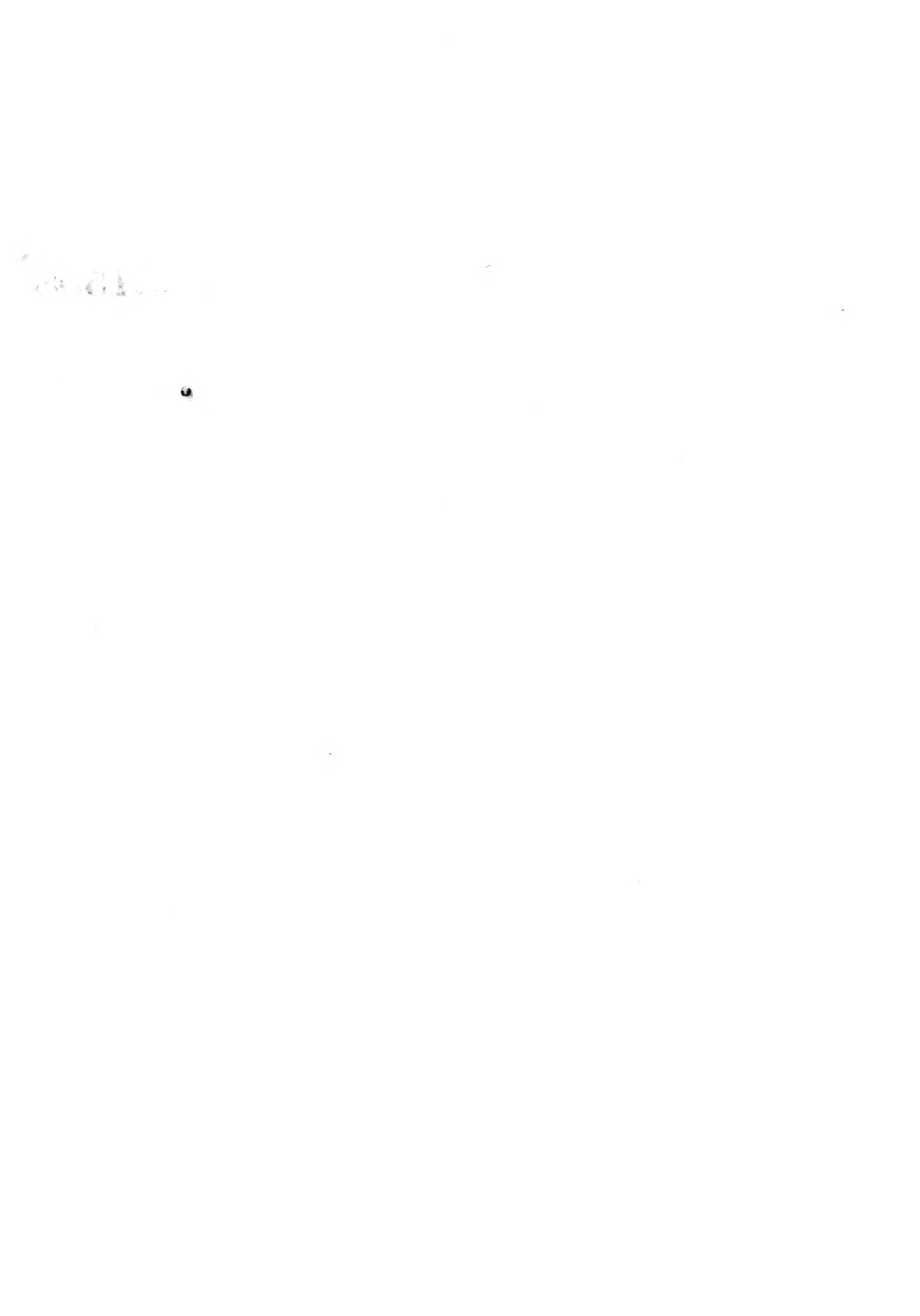
William Hiltons petitio Entred & referred to the Comitte. -

But this petition is not interesting solely to the genealogist. It has even historical importance. In the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society for May, 1876, Dr. Charles Deane published some very valuable notes on a recently discovered indenture, dated Dec. 14, 1622, between David Thomson, of Plymouth, England, of the one part, and three merchants, Abraham Colmer, Nicholas Sherwill and Leonard Pomery also of Plymouth, of the other part, for making a settlement on the Piscataqua River. In these notes he controverts this statement made by Hubbard in his History of New England:

"Some merchants and other gentlemen in the west of England, belonging to the cities of Exeter, Bristol, Shrewsbury, and towns of Plymouth, Dorchester, &c. . . . having obtained patents for several parts of the country of New England, . . . made some attempt of beginning a plantation in some place about Pascataqua river, about the year 1623 . . . They sent over that year, one Mr. David Thompson, with Mr. Edward Hilton, and his brother, Mr. William Hilton, who had been fishmongers in London, with some others, that came along with them, furnished with necessaries for carrying on a plantation there. Possibly others might be sent after them in the years following, 1624 and 1625; some of whom first, in probability, seized on a place called the Little Harbour, on the west side of Pascataqua river, toward, or at, the mouth thereof; the Hiltons, in the mean while, setting up their stages higher up the river, toward the northwest, at or about a place since called Dover. But at that place called the Little Harbour, it is supposed, was the first house set up that ever was built in those parts. . . . Sir Ferdinando Gorges and Capt. John Mason might have a principal hand in carrying on that design, but were not the sole proprietors therein," &c. (pp. 214, 215).

Dr. Deane shows that "the first authentic information of Edward Hilton's presence here is given by Bradford, who says he contributed, in 1628, £1 toward the Thomas Morton affair," and lays stress upon the fact that where applicants for a grant of land had been living in the country, or on the spot, for a number of years, more or less, such term of residence was usually cited in the patent as a consideration therefor; but that the language of the Hilton Patent*

* This Patent was printed in the REGISTER for July, 1870 (xxiv. 264). It bears date March 12, 1629-30, and the livery of seizin was July 7, 1631.



is hardly that which would have been used if Edward Hilton had been here for seven or any considerable number of years. It is worded as follows :

"For and in consideraçon that Edward Hilton & his Associates hath already at his and their owne proper costs and charges transported sundry servants to plant in New England aforesaid at a place there called by the natives Wecanacohunt otherwise Hilton's point lying some two leagues from the mouth of the River Paskataquack in New England aforesaid where they have already Built some houses, and planted Corne. And for that he doth further intend by Gods Divine Assistance, to transport thither more people and cattle, to the good increase and advancement & for the better settling and strengthening of their plantaçon," &c. &c.

He shows that William Hilton and his family had left Plymouth by 1627, and says that "if his brother Edward was then living at Dover, it would be natural to suppose that he joined him; but, though he is subsequently found in that neighborhood, I believe he cannot be traced as having lived either at Dover Neck or at Cohecco. Neither his name nor that of Edward is affixed to the 'Dover Combination' of 20 October, 1640."

But this petition in the Suffolk Court files is newly* discovered evidence, and reopens the case so far as the Hiltons are concerned. It corroborates the statement of Hubbard as to the date of the Dover settlement. William Hilton came in the "Fortune" Nov. 11, 1621, and was followed in the "Anne," July or August, 1623, by his wife and two children, one of whom was the petitioner. In the allotments of land in Plymouth in 1623, there was granted to him one acre lying "to the sea, eastward"* and to his wife and two children three acres butting "against the swampe & reed-ponde." Hubbard says that the friends of John Lyford, who came over in the beginning of the year 1624, and who was driven from the colony soon after with some of his adherents, affirmed "that the first occasion of the quarrel with them was the baptizing of Mr. Hilton's child, who was not joined to the church at Plymouth."† The stay of the Hiltons in Plymouth was a short one, a few months probably, less than a year at the utmost. William Hilton the younger says that "In a little tyme following" his arrival they settled on the Piscataqua River "with Mr Edw: Hilton."

While in England in 1873-4 I collected much genealogical material concerning the name of Hilton, but several very promising clews having failed one after another, I did not succeed in satisfactorily establishing a connection with any of the numerous branches of the Hilton family in England. Bearing in mind the statement of Hubbard that William and Edward Hilton had been fishmongers in London, I went one morning to Fishmongers' Hall. This guild

* Plymouth Colony Records, xli. 5 and 6.

† Hubbard's Hist. of New England, chap. xvi.

—one of the oldest and richest of the twelve great companies—suffered severely in the Great Fire of 1666, and many of its records were destroyed. I found the persons in charge indisposed at first to give me any information at all, evidently considering my request to look at their books a very suspicious one, but after the object of my visit had been more fully explained, the clerk, while stating that it was impossible to allow a stranger to see the records, very courteously offered to examine them himself, and reported after some search that he had found in only two instances the name of Hilton, "Pawle" Hilton in 1616, and Edward Hilton in 1621. He promised however to make further investigation and to send me the result. A few days afterward I received the following letter :

Fishmongers' Hall, London, E. C., 19th February, 1874.

Sir :

On again searching the books, I am quite unable to trace any such name as William Hilton. I have gone back some years. The only names mentioned are Pawle Hilton and Edward Hilton, the latter being admitted as Freeman in the year 1621, as stated by you.

Yours truly,

Per W. B. Towse,

J. WRENCH TOWSE.

John T. Hassam, Esq., Castle and Falcon Hotel,
Aldersgate St., London, E. C.

The only Paul Hilton I could discover any trace of in Doctors' Commons was Paul Hilton of St. Helen's, London. His widow Eleanor was appointed administratrix of his estate, December 16, 1656. On searching the records of the Parish of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, I found there the following entry : "Paul Hilton leather-sellers pentioner buried y^e 22th of May 1656." He certainly could not have been a fishmonger. As the list from which the clerk read in Fishmongers' Hall was evidently from its appearance, although I did not have an opportunity of examining it closely, a modern compilation from some earlier papers or rolls, it is not unreasonable to conjecture that "Pawle" Hilton was a mistake of the copyist for William Hilton. We are then safe in considering that William Hilton and Edward Hilton were admitted Freemen of the Fishmongers' Company in 1616 and 1621 respectively.

I have set forth the matter with this minuteness because I feel convinced that some future investigator who can bring such influence to bear as will give him access to the original papers and records of the Fishmongers' Company, may there obtain clues which will enable him to solve the question of the birth and parentage of William and Edward Hilton, and make a valuable contribution to the history of the English settlements on the Piscataqua.

The answer of the General Court to this petition of William Hilton is to be found in the Mass. Col. Records, IV. (Pt. I.) 430. In the Mass. Archives, XVI. 364, is the following petition, which was printed in the REGISTER, xxxi. 194 :

To the honored Gen^l: Court Now sitting in Boston the 18th. March 168 $\frac{1}{2}$
 The humble petition of James Russell Executo^r to his honored flather Rich^d
 Russell Esq^r. to this honored Court is y^t. whereas my honored flather long
 Since bought of m^r William Hilton of Charlstowne A certain peell or tract of
 Land y^t. was conveyd to y^e. Said Hilton by tahanto Indian Saggamoar of
 penny Cooke and Also Acknowledged & recorded, as Appears by Said
 Deeds in Court, w^{ch}. Still want the Confirmation of this Court to make y^e
 Said Deeds Authentick, w^{ch}. is humbly requested from this Court y^t. they
 wold pleas to confirme y^e Same w^{ch}. will oblidge

Yo^r humble Serv^t

JA: RUSSELL.

In Answer to this Petition this Court doth grant to m^r James Russell
 a Farne of a thousand Acres in lieu of the Lands sold by m^r Hilton to his
 Father provided it be laid out together in some free place within the limits
 of Said Grant or in any other free place thereabouts.

The Magist^{rs}. have passed this with reference to the consent of their
 Brethren the dep^{ys}. March. 20th. 168 $\frac{1}{2}$.

20 mrc^h 8 $\frac{1}{2}$.

SAMUEL NOWELL p order.

The Deputs Judge meete to respite the Determination hereof untill the
 next Session of this Court. William Torrey Cleric.

In the "Notes and Queries" published in the REGISTER for
 April, 1880 (xxxiv. 203), I asked for further information concern-
 ing a sloop stolen from York harbor November 8, 1711, by a
 Frenchman and three Indians, and their pursuit by Ensign William
 Hilton of York with six of his company and six of the inhabitants,
 which resulted in the recovery of the sloop and the killing and scalp-
 ing of the Indians.

The following letter has recently been found by Mr. Trask in the
 Suffolk Court files. The signature is an autograph, but the body
 of the letter and its superscription are in another hand. The "other
 affairer" here referred to may be that about which the inquiry was
 made.

Portsm^o x^{br} y^e 27th 1711

May It Please yo^r Excell.

I heare is with me five of y^e: 8 Vollandier y^t Listed with me, when I
 was Down att Boston: three of them are Deserted: Viz^t: Sam^l Harrison:
 John Hayes: haue rec^d the Countries allowance of provisions: Both att
 Newichawanack: and York: I understand they are Both in Boston: Har-
 rison: Keeps att the windmill: Sam^l Williams Keeps att Linn: John Hayes
 Is married in Boston I understand: they haue Every one rec^d mony of
 me in Listing in this Expedition vnder Colloⁿ. Walton: If yo^r Excellency
 think flitt to order they may be sent allong: I have writ to yo^r Excellency
 Concerning my other affairer and am

Yo^r Excellency's most Humble & obedient Serv^t

William Hilton

To His Excellency Joseph Dudley Esq^r Cap^t Generall & Governor in Chief:
 In and over: her Maj^{ty}'s Province of Massachusetts & New hampshire
 &c.

The following are fac-similes of the signatures of Captain Amos Hilton⁵ (1741-1783), Captain Amos Hilton⁶ (1764-1796), and Captain Amos Hilton⁷ (1786-1850), mentioned in the article entitled "Some of the Descendants of William Hilton," above referred to.

Amos Hilton

1778.

Amos Hilton

Port Louis, Isle of France, Nov. 22, 1789.

Amos Hilton

Leghorn, Feb. 2, 1818.

